



Penny Bernard Schaber

STATE REPRESENTATIVE 57th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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For Immediate Release
October 18, 2011

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Rep. Bernard Schaber Secures Changes to Private School Directory DPI Will Add Disclaimer in Response to the Grace's Garden Academy Case

MADISON- In response to concerns from parents in the wake of the closure of Grace's Garden Academy, the state Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will add a disclaimer to its private school directory to clarify the scope of the Department's authority in regulating and monitoring private schools. Rep. Penny Bernard Schaber (D-Appleton) pushed for the change after the owner of the Appleton day care center used her facility's listing in the private school directory to block an order to close by the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

"We can't close the loophole in the statutes until the Legislature reconvenes next year, but this situation must be addressed immediately," said Rep. Bernard Schaber, "So I've been working with DPI and DCF to find changes in department policy—like adding this disclaimer—that we can make right now to prevent situations like Grace's Garden from happening in the future."

The disclaimer states that DPI "has not reviewed or approved the educational programming offered by the private school," and encourages parents to review their school's credentials with a private accrediting agency. The Department added the disclaimer to the online directory this week, and will include it in the printed edition beginning with the 2011-12 school year.

Rep. Bernard Schaber applauded the change: "The owners of Grace's Garden took advantage of a gray area in the law to blur the difference between private schools and day cares, and it put children at risk. I'm grateful that the Department is helping parents get the information they need to make the right choices for their kids."

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